

Guthrie,
Hamilton,
Hannesson,
Hanson,
Harris,
Hay,
Hocken,
Hodgins,
Hubbs,
Johnstone (Cape Breton
North-Victoria),
Jones,
Kaiser,
Kennedy (Winnipeg
South Centre),
Ladner,
Langworthy,
Lucas,
MacDonald
(Cape Breton South),
Macdonald (Kings),
Macdonald (Richmond-
West Cape Breton),
Macdougall,
MacLaren,
Maclean (York South),
MacNutt,
McClenaghan,
McGibbon,
McKillop,
McQuarrie,
Maloney,
Manion,
Maybee,
Meighen,
Messervy,
Mewburn,
Morand,
Mullins,

Murphy,
Nicholson,
O'Neill,
Peck,
Perley (Sir George),
Pettit,
Preston,
Price,
Quinn,
Robinson,
Rogers,
Ross (Kingston City),
Rowe,
Ryckman,
Ryerson,
Senn,
Short,
Simpson,
Sinclair,
Smith,
Smoke,
Spence (Parkdale),
Stansell,
Stevens,
Stewart (Leeds),
Stinson,
Stirling,
Sutherland
(Oxford South),
Sutherland
(Oxford North),
Thompson,
Tolmie,
Tummon,
White (London),
White (Mount Royal),
Wilson (Wentworth),
Wright.—114.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MACKENZIE KING moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Mr. Speaker, I desire to ask the government if the report which is current to-night that an order in council has been passed appointing certain civil service commissioners is true, and also if it is true that just recently another has been passed appointing a senator; and also if the Prime Minister intends to make any statement as to the attitude of the government following three defeats to-night.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, if my right hon. friend will retract the last statement he has just made, I will answer his former questions.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 5.17 a.m. (Saturday).

[Mr. Speaker.]

Monday, June 28, 1926

The House met at two o'clock.

RESIGNATION OF GOVERNMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR. MACKENZIE KING—
ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, I have a very important announcement which I wish to make to the House before proceeding any further. The public interest demands a dissolution of this House of Commons. As Prime Minister I so advised His Excellency the Governor General shortly after noon to-day. His Excellency having declined to accept my advice to grant a dissolution, to which I believe under British practice I was entitled, I immediately tendered my resignation which His Excellency has been graciously pleased to accept. In the circumstances, as one of the members of the House of Commons, I would move that the House do now adjourn.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: Mr. Speaker, if I caught the Prime Minister's words aright, they were that the House adjourn; that the government has resigned. I wish to add only this that I am—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I might say that this motion is not debatable.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not propose to debate it, but I presume the Prime Minister will agree that I have a right to make a statement. As the House knows, we are close to the end of the session and the question of how the session should be finished is one of great importance to the country. I think there should be a conference between myself and the Prime Minister.

Mr. CANNON: I rise to a point of order. The motion made is not debatable.

Mr. SPEAKER: Everyone knows that a motion to adjourn is not debatable, but a grave and extraordinary situation has arisen. I do not see that there is any opposition to the motion to adjourn; but Bourinot at page 355 says plainly that under such circumstances the leaders in the House of Commons are allowed by courtesy of the House to make statements. I understand the right hon. gentleman is not debating the motion to adjourn. That would be out of order.

Mr. CANNON: I understand that the motion has been carried. If it has not been carried, how could the right hon. gentleman speak on it?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I make my position clear? At the present time there

is no government. I am not Prime Minister; I cannot speak as Prime Minister. I can speak only as one member of this House, and it is as a humble member of this House that I submit that inasmuch as His Excellency is without an adviser, I do not think it would be proper for the House to proceed to discuss anything. If the House is to continue its proceedings, some one must assume, as His Excellency's adviser, the responsibility for His Excellency's refusal to grant a dissolution in the existing circumstances; and until His Excellency has an adviser who will assume this responsibility, I submit that this House should not proceed to discuss any matters whatever.

Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. gentleman is technically right. The motion to adjourn is not debatable. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Meighen) stated that he did not intend to debate that motion but he wanted to make a statement. Under the circumstances, according to Bourinot, he should be allowed to make a statement.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The only statement I wish to make is this. I think on the question of the completion of the session there should be a conference between the Prime Minister and myself, in which conference I am prepared to engage.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There is no Prime Minister—may I emphasize that? When there is a Prime Minister he may come to this House and announce his policy and his wishes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Until when is the House to adjourn?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I assume until to-morrow.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 2.15 p.m.

Tuesday, June 29, 1926

The House met at two o'clock.

GOVERNMENT OF MR. MEIGHEN

FORMATION OF MINISTRY—PROGRAMME OUTLINED—STATEMENT PRESENTED BY SIR HENRY DRAYTON

Sir HENRY DRAYTON (Leader of the House): Before the proceedings open I desire to give to the House a statement prepared by the right hon. the Prime Minister (Mr. Meighen) in connection with changes in the ministerial situation. The statement is as follows:

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Immediately following the resignation of the late government and the adjournment of the House yesterday, His Excellency, the Governor General sent for the Right Honourable Arthur Meighen, leader of the Conservative party and requested him to form a new administration. Mr. Meighen advised His Excellency last evening that he would undertake this task, and was sworn in this morning as Prime Minister, Secretary of State for External Affairs and President of the Privy Council.

Having in mind the fact that the present session has now continued for almost six months, and is very near its close, Mr. Meighen believed it to be the first duty of any government he might form to conclude with all convenient despatch the work of the present session. Such a course in preference to a somewhat prolonged adjournment was demanded also by a just regard for the convenience of hon. members, especially those who come from a great distance.

It was manifestly impossible to effect this result if a government was to be formed in the usual way and if ministers were to be assigned portfolios necessitating the vacating of their seats and consequent by-elections. The delay thus involved would, especially at this period of the year, have entailed unnecessary hardship. The Prime Minister accordingly decided to constitute and submit to His Excellency a temporary ministry composed of seven members, who would be sworn in without portfolio, and who would assume responsibility as acting ministers of the several departments.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Qh, qh!

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I am delighted to hear the applause of hon. gentlemen opposite and to note their anxiety to have the session brought to a close.

An hon. MEMBER: Read the statement.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Hon. gentlemen are unnecessarily alarmed. Let me repeat the statement which they apparently approve:

The Prime Minister accordingly decided to constitute and submit to His Excellency a temporary ministry composed of seven members, who would be sworn in without portfolio, and who would assume responsibility as acting ministers of the several departments.

This step has been taken and the following members have accepted office as ministers without portfolio:

Sir Henry Drayton.
Hon. R. J. Manion.
Sir George H. Perley.
Hon. H. H. Stevens.
Hon. Hugh Guthrie.
Hon. W. A. Black.

Honourable R. B. Bennett is on his way to Ottawa from Calgary and will be asked to accept similar duties upon arrival. Sir George Perley will, during Mr. Meighen's absence from the House, have charge of matters affecting the Department of External Affairs and of the Privy Council.

These men have been assigned responsibility as acting ministers as follows: Sir Henry Drayton, Finance department and Railways department, Honourable R. J. Manion, Department of Health, Department of Soldier's Civil Re-establishment, Post Office department, Immigration department, and Labour department; Sir George Perley, Department of Secretary of State and Department of Public Works; Honourable H. H. Stevens, Customs department, Interior department, Department of Indian Affairs and Mines, Agriculture department, and Trade and Commerce department; Hon.

Hugh Guthrie, Department of Justice and Department of National Defence; Honourable W. A. Black, Department of Marine and Fisheries.

Mr. Meighen having accepted an office of emolument under the crown, namely that of Prime Minister, has thereby vacated his seat, and has asked me to assume temporarily the duty of leading the government in the House. As already stated the government deems it its first duty to give parliament an opportunity of dealing with all such matters as should be disposed of prior to the close of the session. Among these is the resolution of the Honourable member for St. Henri, for adoption of the report of the special committee which investigated the Department of Customs and Excise, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Stevens, as amended by the amendment submitted by Mr. Fansher. The government feels that under all the circumstances it has no other course than to ask the House to take up and dispose of this subject in the same way as others which appear on the order paper. While in opposition the present Prime Minister announced to parliament the acceptance by his party of the amendment moved by the Honourable Mr. Stevens, as amended by the amendment of Mr. Fansher. This position the same party takes now when in office and the adoption of such amendment so amended represents the view of the government and the advice of the government to the House. So soon as prorogation takes effect Mr. Meighen will immediately address himself to the task of constituting a government in the method established by custom. The present plan is merely to meet an unusual if not unprecedented situation.

PRIVILEGE—MR. MACKENZIE KING

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege to read to the House an article which appears in the morning press—I am reading from the Ottawa Citizen of June 29, but I assume that the same article has appeared in other papers throughout the Dominion. As the article contains a reference to His Excellency the Governor General which reflects on His Excellency as well as on others, I think it important that an immediate statement should be made with reference thereto. The article is as follows:

The Canadian Press understands that His Excellency the Governor General consented to sign only such of the appointments submitted to him by the Prime Minister as had been made on Friday, before the adverse votes to the government, and these included the two senatorships, W. M. MacDougald, Montreal, Quebec, and Dr. Daniel Riley, High River, Alta., and the judgeships already announced, as well as the two appointments to the Civil Service Commission, these being made Friday.

[Sir Henry Drayton.]

The government had also determined appointments to the vacant senatorship in Nova Scotia, to two judgeships in Quebec, and one judgeship in Ontario, it is stated, but as these were not submitted to His Excellency until after Friday's votes, Lord Byng felt himself unable to assent to them.

To the last paragraph I give an emphatic denial. Not one word of it is true, Mr. Speaker. The paragraph to which I give denial is this:

The government had also determined appointments to the vacant senatorship in Nova Scotia—

Appointment to the vacant senatorship in Nova Scotia was never determined by the government and no recommendation whatever was made to His Excellency in reference thereto.

—to two judgeships in Quebec and one judgeship in Ontario, it is stated, but as these were not submitted to His Excellency until after Friday's votes, Lord Byng felt himself unable to assent to them.

May I say as the one who was occupying the position of Prime Minister at the time, that I did not present a single order to His Excellency the Governor General which His Excellency declined to accept at the time; except the one order asking for dissolution of this House, which His Excellency said he was unable to assent to.

While I am referring to this matter, Mr. Speaker, may I draw Your Honour's attention and the attention of the House to the position which I took with His Excellency after the last general election? I then took the position that owing to the uncertainty which existed as to the control of parliament, I would not ask His Excellency to make any appointments to office, nor would I commit the government to any new course of action without the House in the first instance deciding upon the party that had the right to carry on. I shall expect that the Prime Minister now in office will give the same undertaking to His Excellency—that no appointments will be made and that the government will not be committed to any new courses of action until it is definitely known whether the right hon. Prime Minister enjoys the full approval and confidence of this House.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON (Leader of the House): Mr. Speaker, I hasten to assure my right hon. friend that the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Meighen) will conduct himself in his office with the most perfect propriety.

REPORTS

Eighth report of the select standing committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills—Mr. Brown.

Ninth report of the select standing committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills—Mr. Bowen.